

Reflections

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Society of Abidance in Truth

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Why Reflections?

Reflections is a special publication of SAT.

The print version is intended for members of SAT to enhance their spiritual understandings and practices.

This on-line version is offered to so that Reflections can be available to all.

*Reflections presents the actual teachings of
Ramana Maharshi in every issue.*

*Reflections presents enduring Wisdom from
ancient texts in every issue.*

*Reflections presents a transcript of satsang in every issue so that
aspirants can have the opportunity
to carefully study and reflect upon the teachings
given in these sacred events.*

So, read, reflect on what is here, and then dive within to realize.

Reflections

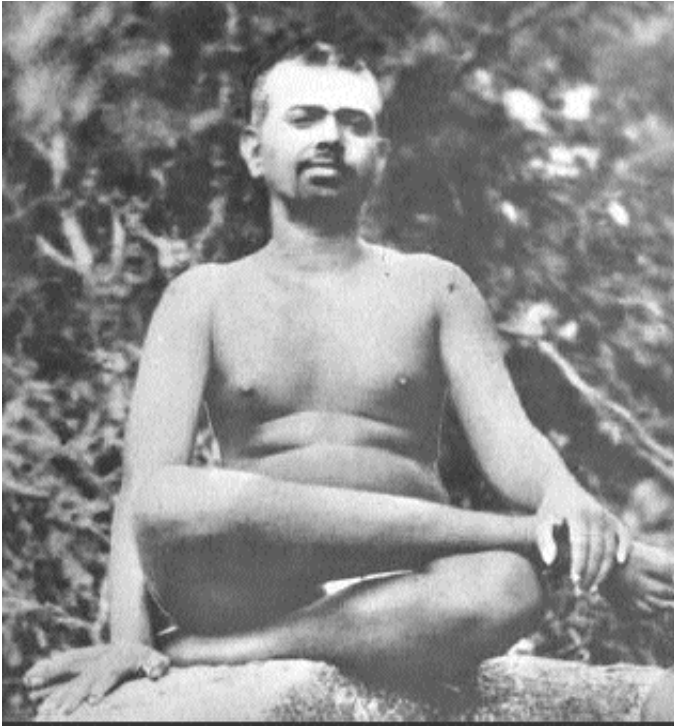
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Om Tat Sat

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Sri Ramana Maharshi

Invocation

He, indeed, is the Supreme.
He, indeed, is the Guru.
He, indeed, is all-pervasive.
Those who have become Him say,
“He, indeed, is my Guru.”

My Lord is the embodiment of love for His
devotees.
He is blissful Silence and gracious Master.

Tayumannavar

Let us meditate on Ramana,
The Teacher of Reality,
Who dwells within my inmost Self
As I, as I,
Bringing in full measure
The joy of Silence,
Ending the delusive pride
Of a divided self’s self-love.

Muruganar

Those who enter the circle lit
By the silent Guru’s grace unfailing
Feast on the fruit of Bliss eternal,
Far, far beyond the ego’s reach.

Muruganar

The Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi

(From *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*)

D.: When I read Sri Bhagavan's works, I find that investigation is said to be the one method for Realization.

M.: Yes, that is vicara (inquiry).

D.: How is that to be done?

M.: The questioner must admit the existence of his self. "I Am" is the Realization. To pursue the clue until Realization is vicara. Vicara and Realization are the same.

D.: It is elusive. What shall I meditate upon?

M.: Meditation requires an object to meditate upon, whereas there is only the subject without the object in vicara. Meditation differs from vicara in this way.

D.: Is not dhyana (meditation) one of the efficient processes for Realization?

M.: Dhyana is concentration on an object. It fulfills the purpose of keeping away diverse thoughts and fixing the mind on a single thought, which must also disappear before Realization. But Realization is nothing new to be acquired. It is already there, but obstructed by a screen of thoughts. All our attempts are directed for lifting this screen, and then Realization is revealed.

If a true seeker is advised to meditate, many may go away satisfied with the advice. But some one among them may turn around and ask, "Who am I to meditate upon an object?" Such a one must be told to find the

Self. That is the finality. That is vicara.

D.: Will vicara alone do in the absence of meditation?

M.: Vicara is the process and the goal also. "I Am" is the goal and the final Reality. To hold to it with effort is practice. When spontaneous and natural, it is Realization.

D.: How is the mind to be stilled?

M.: Looking at the mind with the mind or fixing the mind in the Self brings the mind under the control of the Self.

D.: Is there any yoga, i.e., a process, for it?

M.: Vicara alone will do it.

D.: How is purna Brahman (the perfect fullness of Brahman) to be attained? What is the method best suited for a grihasta (householder)?

M.: You have already said purna, i.e., perfection. Are you apart from Purna? If apart from it, will it be purna? If not apart, how does the question arise? The Knowledge that Brahman is Purna and that you are not apart from the same is the finality. See it, and you will find that you are not a grihasta or any limited being.

D.: What are the tattva-s?

M.: Knowledge of Purna Brahman will elucidate the other matters automatically.

M.: There is no being who is not conscious and, therefore, who is not Siva. Not only is he Siva, but also all else of which he is aware or unaware. Yet he thinks, in sheer ignorance, that he sees the universes in diverse forms. But if he sees his Self, he is not aware of his separateness from the universe. In fact, his individuality and the other entities vanish, although they persist in all their forms. Siva is seen as the universe. But the seer does not see the background, itself. Think of the man who sees only the cloth and not the cotton of which it is made or of the man who sees the pictures moving on the screen in a cinema show and not the screen, itself, as the background; or, again, the man who sees the letters that he reads but not the paper on which they are written. The objects are, thus, Consciousness and forms. But the ordinary person sees the objects in the universe but not Siva in these forms. Siva is Being assuming these forms and the Consciousness seeing them. That is to say, Siva is the background underlying both the subject and the object and, again, Siva in repose and Siva in action, or Siva and Sakti, or the Lord and the universe. Whatever it is said to be, it is only Consciousness, whether in repose or action, Who is there that is not conscious? So, who is not realized? How, then, can questions arise doubting realization or desiring it? If “I” am not pratyaksha (directly perceived) to me, I can then say that Siva is not pratyaksha.

These questions arise because you have limited the Self to the body. Only then the ideas of within and without, of the subject and the object, arise. The objective visions have no intrinsic value. Even if they are everlasting,

they cannot satisfy the person. Uma has Siva always with Her. Both together form Ardhanarisvara. Yet, she wanted to know Siva in His true nature. She made tapas. In her dhyana, she saw a bright light. She thought, “This cannot be Siva, for it is within the compass of my vision. I am greater than this light.” So, she resumed her tapas. Thoughts disappeared. Stillness prevailed. She then realized that Being is Siva in His true nature.

Muruganar cited Appar’s stanza: “To remove my darkness and give me light, Thy Grace must work through me only.”

Sri Bhagavan mentioned Manickavachagar’s: “We do bhajana and the rest, but we have not seen or heard of those who had seen Thee.” One cannot see God and yet retain individuality. The seer and the seen unite into one Being. There is no cognizer, no cognition, and no cognized. All merge in (with) the One Supreme Diva only!

Identity

Satsang

May 7, 2006

Om Om Om

(Silence)

N.: What we are, the Self, is Absolute Being. Being is Consciousness, and Being is Bliss. Its nature is Truth, its nature is Knowledge, and it is infinite. It is One only, invariable, and it is That which alone is.

Ignorance, which has no existence apart from the Self, for the Self is only One, appears to cast a veil over that single, truthful Self. When there is the veil, there is the projection of the unreal, which is characterized by multiplicity. To remove the delusion and, thereby, eliminate all duality and thus abide in the fullness and perfection of the Bliss of the Self, Sri Bhagavan has given the instruction to inquire, “Who am I?” Why “Who am I?”? It is because what you regard as you identity is of paramount importance.

Although the inquiry, “Who am I?” can be used, in one sense, for a variety of goals, such as the submergence or removal of thought, the withdrawal of the senses from their objects, and such, the inquiry is of paramount importance because it deals with your identity. What we regard as our identity goes into the composition of how we regard anything, even the view that there is anything to be regarded. The identity is the key, and the inquiry, “Who am

I?” is the introspective search to know your identity as it is. It is a nonobjective method because you identity, the Truth of the Self, is nonobjective. What you are can never be a known object or an unknown object. It cannot be an object, whether that object is gross or subtle, something sensed or something conceived.

Therefore, when you inquire to know the Self, you must actually inquire to know the Self and not be preoccupied with other nonexistent things. Plunge inward to know what your actual Being is. The negation of “not this, not his (neti, neti),” as stated in the Upanishads, is also for the purpose of revealing what your actual Existence, or identity, is. Loosely we speak of “becoming That” by virtue of such inquiry or meditation, but really this is not a becoming of anything. It is the Realization through Knowledge of That which is unborn, ever attained, and, when known in its own innate Knowledge, ever revealed.

It is the clarification of one’s own identity, which is the essence of Knowledge, that is the real fruit of any spiritual practice. It is that which Self-Knowledge, the path of inquiry, deals exclusively. Let us consider the case of devotion. What happens? First, the identity in relation to objects is dissolved. The attachment to things is dissolved. Then the fruits of one’s actions are lost or surrendered to the degree that they pertain to oneself. The, in such devotion, the idea of being the performer of action is lost. Clearly you can see the dissolution of false identity in this. Then the very idea of life in the body, the senses, and being the enjoyer or the one who

maneuvers the senses is dissolved or relinquished. The, being the mind and the buddhi, which decides where the mind moves, is surrendered. Finally, the very notion of individuality, of existing distinct from God in any way, is abandoned. It is the same dissolution of false identity.

When we inquire, “Who am I?”, we dive directly into what is our identity and relinquish what is not our identity. This is the discrimination between the Self and the not-Self.

If you deeply consider whatever you regard as an obstruction, obstacle, chasm, or barrier between you and Self-Realization, you will see that it is not so much the thing, the thought, or the pattern of thought that seems to be between you and the Truth, but rather the identity, however formed and by whatever qualities characterized, of the “you” that is apart from the Self that has this wall or obstruction. Do you see what is being pointed out? To remove or hop over the wall or obstruction, you have only to inquire as to who it is, what makes up the identity, of the one who is apparently bound, separated, or divided from the Truth.

The Realization of Truth is nondual. How can it be nondual, in your experience, unless there is the utter elimination the assumption, the false supposition, of existing as individual entity? As the Maharshi points out in Saddarsanam, unless there is the elimination of that “I,” how will the Truth be known. The Truth alone can know the Truth. Consciousness alone can realize Consciousness. Another cannot do so. In nondual Truth, that which is realized and the

realizer are identical. This means that they are one and the same thing, not two things of equal quality.

As long as the individual is taken to be real, how can there be this Realization? If one inquires, “Who is this that is styled as ‘I?’” how could there be a state of non-Realization?

There are never two “I’s.” Instruction along the lines of a “higher Self and a lower self,” “a self and the Supreme Self,” “an ego self and the True Self,” are for purposes of aiding the aspirant to Realization, and is not a statement of concrete fact. What is true is the Existence, or real Being of the Self, is always One and can never be divided. Duality, even the slight idea of “I and That,” is composed of mere illusion. It is delusion, only imagination. The cessation of such imagination is Knowledge.

(silence)

So, determine your identity. You will find yourself bodiless, without a mind, without senses, without prana, without beginning, without end, and without any thing or quality whatsoever, but perfectly full as ever-unchanging Existence.

If you have a question this morning, at any point, please feel free to ask, and, if you wish to relate your own experience, at any point, please feel free to speak.

Q.: Trying to look to the core, I see that still I hold the idea that the world is real. That means I still hold myself to be an individual. What is called for is for me to continue the inquiry. My discrimination as to what is real

continues along with the inquiry. I have been reading the commentary on Sankara's Crest Jewel (of Discrimination, Vivekacudamani). It is clear that the body, mind, and sense of identity depend on Consciousness. Consciousness does not depend on any of them. So, what is needed is not more discrimination but more inquiry.

N.: Let your discrimination and inquiry become identical. The Self is not a particular thing; it is the Existence. The existence of another is a notion based upon some attribute or characteristic regarded as your identity. When you discern your identity, you truly discriminate between what is real and what is not.

Rather than try to decide if the world is real or unreal, you can very directly inquire, "Who is it that sees the world?" If the idea that there is a world still remains, you need to further inquire as to who sees the world. The seen is always the same as the seer. At the moments that you think that there is a world, what do you take yourself to be? You do not continuously think that there is world. Consider deep sleep. Sometimes, in the waking state, you say that there is a world. What composes that so-called perception? Really, it is only a conception. What goes into the make up of it? Something must be regarded as you before you say that it is. Discern this. Apply to discrimination to that.

The determination as real or unreal of a world that is not is not of supreme significance. It is important to the extent that it involves your identity. Those who know the Self declare the Truth of No-creation. (silence)

Those who do not know the Truth and declare that there is a creation are, themselves, not really created. Therefore, we should inquire to see if we are a created thing or if we have some objective attributes. Are we a perceiver, a conceiver, thinker, a sensor, a body, and so forth? Or, do these have nothing to do with us?

Another Q.: From your discourse today, I see more clearly the progression of misidentification, from the body and thinking the world is real and from the senses and thinking that the body and world are real and so on. More than a question, I have a thank you. There is more to look at here, for sure.

N.: Perhaps, you see more clearly why the Maharshi has stated that all the thoughts are for "I." All of them trace back to a root notion of "I." That "I" may seem to be endowed with a mind, senses, and a body. Those are the shapes that it takes. There must some one, apparently, who takes those shapes or assumes those definitions. So, we should liberate ourselves from all those extraneous definitions and even the notion of "I." That is also extraneous to our nature. Then, we see the unchanging Existence, the pure Consciousness, that we have really been the entire time. That seen, bondage is over, and suffering can be no more. (silence)

Another Q.: I just woke up before coming here. I usually wake up quite slowly. So, though usually I am awake by the time I get her, right now, my mind is barely awake.

N.: Half awake and half asleep?

Q.: (laughing) Yes.

N.: Must be the jagrat sushupti, the waking deep sleep of which sages speak. (laughter)

Q.: It would be so cool to know that I do not ever change states. My mind changes, and I believe that I change.

N.: What makes you say that you change states? You were the witness of the sleeping state, and you are now the witness of the waking state. What change has occurred for you?

Q.: Hmm.

N.: There has been a change in the appearance of what is objective, which is merely imagined within the mind, itself. What change has happened for you?

Q.: That is interesting. That gives more clarity. If I depend at all upon the mental faculty, that obviously disappears.

N.: Do you depend upon the mental faculty? What do you regard as you?

Q.: The mental faculty is not the commonality.

N.: The mental faculties are different in the three states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep.

Q.: Even in the waking state, it is modified very easily.

N.: Very easily. Moreover, you can see these things change slowly or quickly, as you noticed this morning. The speed at which they change does not in any way alter the state, or nature, of your Existence. This is true for wak-

ing, dreaming, and sleep states, as well as for any kind of mental mode within those states. That which is changeful is not your Self. The rapidity of change has nothing to do with the Self.

Q.: If I would oscillate back and forth.

N.: Yes. Fast or slow has no bearing on the Self. So, you did not arrive at the waking state this morning.

Q.: (laughing)

N.: I assume that that is what you meant when you said that you just got here. (laughter) You were not in sleep, and you are not now is a waking state. These states appear only within you. You cannot be anything that appears within them.

Q.: Yes. They change and are modified radically, and anything within those states is completely modified.

N.: Yes, and they are in those states, and you are not in the states. You cannot simultaneously be the ever-present Existence and something within those modifying, changeful states. You cannot simultaneously be the formless, real Being and some imagined form within a state of mind. It is not possible for you to abandon your own Existence. This is the experience of everyone. Since you cannot abandon your real Being, and since Being is undivided, utterly indivisible, how could you ever be anything that ever appears in any state of mind?

Q.: I had a very good experience of meditation last Friday. I see clearly that the discrimination must be clear. I am still dependent on a state of mind. Yesterday, I

meditated just before going to bed, but obviously it wasn't deep enough to go through any state, because it was modified.

N.: In what way did you undergo modification?

Q.: What I believe to be myself.

N.: That will always undergo modification.

Q.: (laughing) Yes.

N.: But does your Self undergo modification? If your meditation be upon the Self, it is of the Self, and it will not be modified. What actually is the substance of meditation?

Q.: The substance is always the same. One could not even do a meditation if he did not have that substance.

N.: That substance is pure Consciousness. It is the end or the fruit of meditation, the substance and essence of meditation, and it is what enables the illumination of meditation to even happen. Does this Consciousness disappear when you are dreaming or when you are sleeping?

If you misidentify with the mind in the waking state, or with a particular part of it, it is going to undergo change or destruction when there is a change of the state of mind, such as dreaming or sleep. How meditation can be continuous then seems elusive. You grasp it, but it seems to slip away. It is all a matter of what you regard as your identity. Are you a traveler in the waking state, dreaming state, or sleep state? Or, are you the substrate or space on or in which these appear falsely. The substrate does not move. The space of

Consciousness is not modified. Identify only with the space of Consciousness. Do not take yourself to be an illusory part.

Q.: This is very deep. What is occurring right now is due to inquiry. As you discussed, it is a matter of seeing clearly what I am not, but what I was taking myself to be.

N.: Discarding what you are not but what you were taking yourself to be by discrimination, something remains that is solid and clear. It is the Knowledge, itself. It is you Being, Consciousness. So the Self of Brahman is described as Saccidananda, Being-Consciousness-Bliss, as well as Satyam-Jnanam-Anantam, Truth-Knowledge-Infinity.

You, yourself, who are Being-Consciousness, and also Bliss, are the infinite Knowledge, the infinite Truth.

Q.: To know this infinite Truth, I am accustomed to having a sattvic mind. My mind has now gone from tamasic to sattvic states during this conversation.

N.: That which knows the change from one guna to the other is, itself, beyond the guna-s. You saw sleep, you saw waking, you saw tamas, darkness or inertia, and you saw sattva. Who is this you?

Q.: (quiet)

N.: The one who silently witnesses all this is not participating in it. To know the Truth, abandon the idea of being a distinct one who does not know. You will not remain as one who does know. We only loosely speak of a jnani. You are the Knowledge itself. The Knowledge is the only knower. That is pure Consciousness. You cannot separate yourself

from Consciousness in order to grasp it. If, though, you abandon the false assumption of individuality, you can be said to grasp the Truth fully, because you, yourself, are that Truth.

Q.: The understanding is of not being a separate knower of Truth but knowing Truth directly.

N.: Yes, because Truth is not inert but of the nature of pure Consciousness. It knows itself. It alone knows itself. A so-called “other” cannot know it. A so-called “other” does not actually exist. It is not who you are. With the identity as an “other,” there can be no perfect Knowledge. Without that false identity and abiding as the Self, there can be no ignorance.

Another Q.: In meditation, I wish to take the world as unreal but not make that an obstacle, because what is essential is to know my identity. Your speaking of this reminded me of the Maharshi’s statement that the seeker should be like the diver seeking air. One goes to where the light is and does not become entangled in anything because it is so urgent and so important. So, if I meditate that the world is unreal and that takes me deeper, that would be great. If it did not, I would first have to find my identity. I should not turn what is meant to be propulsion for me into an obstacle. This seems to be connected to non-attachment and not being the doer. Other traditions call this “not-clinging” and “choiceless.” It feels very free to have this proper goal orientation.

N.: If one takes a statement of wisdom such as, “The world is unreal,” which is a

statement of fact, of truth, and turn it into a mental opinion about which one argues, hopefully only in one’s mind and not with other people, one needs to ask himself how that is assisting in Self-Realization. It does not even assist in an understanding of what the wise mean when they say that the world is unreal. It is not a matter of convincing oneself to form the right opinion in one’s mind. Rather, it is a matter of knowing who we are. Then, we see the truths of such statements as plainly self-evident.

You said that you didn’t want the meditation upon the world being unreal to become an obstacle. How could it ever be an obstacle? To arrive at the depth of its meaning, you must dive within to know yourself. You must look at the perceiver. Meditating on the unreality of the world cannot be an obstruction to one’s spiritual practice. If, though, you did not do so in the light of inquiry, it would not go nearly deep enough.

Q.: The Maharshi seems to take up that theme in “Forty Verses,” in which he advises this rather to argue “with form” or “without form,” saying that all would delight in the bliss of the Self.

N.: So, we know from that instruction that the prime thing is to abide in the egoless state and know the Self directly. If we know the Self, we know what is real. The instructions do not mean that we should try to convince ourselves in our minds of an objective opinion, and it certainly does not mean that we should remain with the old opinion such as that the world is real. The meaning is clear: we should inquire deeply and thereby find out what the wise have meant when they have

stated the facts as they are.

Q.: The sages are giving a preview of what the scenery might be from the vision of Truth, but this is not something for which one should hanker for its own sake. It is similar with references to the bliss of the Self. The seeker should not be asking, “Where is my bliss?” but should be asking, “Who am I?”, having been guided by that preview without turning that into a diversion.

N.: It does not really represent a difficulty. There are not really these “dangers on the path.” The expounding of spiritual instruction has a greater purpose than a preview, or “coming attractions.” The purpose of spiritual instruction, as the Maharshi has said, is to restore the mind to its proper place, referring to the mind that has wandered away and taken on an identity separate from the Self. The purpose of spiritual instruction even as it is given, and of course when it is reflected upon and meditated upon deeply, is to cause the seeker to experience first-hand his own identity, to abide as the Self, even then and there. It is not really a preview.

There is not much danger. Let us say that someone hears about eternal Bliss and starts to ask, “Where is my bliss? It does not seem to be there.” This will lead on to a deeper inquiry, “Where is Bliss?” The seeker is saying, “Where, where?”, and the wise are saying, “Here.” The wise are saying, “It is.” The one still in ignorance is saying, “I don’t know. I don’t see it.” This will lead on to a deeper inquiry as to where exactly this bliss is to be found. If it is already existing, why is it not experienced? When that question is raised, it will lead back to a questioning of one’s

identity. The, he will set about clarifying his own identity. There is no danger. Such has only helped.

When there is Knowledge of one’s own Existence, Bliss is recovered. The desire for Bliss has led to such inquiry. So, you see that the path to Self-Realization is not tricky. It is not fraught with pits and potholes. Yet it must be subjective, nonobjective.

Another Q.: I am understanding that it is irrelevant to consider whether or not the world is real. The path is the inner deepening.

N.: Yes, it is irrelevant, but the identity that is the basis of the belief that it is real or unreal is very relevant. In *Saddarsanam*, the Maharshi has pointed out that to discuss that the world is real or unreal, is happiness or not, and so forth and so on is vain, and that you need to inquire into the Self. In *Who am I?*, he says that, as long as the world is regarded as real, there will not be Self-Realization. How do you combine the two statements? It must be with your own identity.

If you continue, in any degree, to think that the world is actually existent, the world is real, from what position do you say that the world is? From what unexamined misidentification do you take that view? If one does not abandon that view by Knowledge, but merely attempts to convince herself that the world is unreal, while the effort is noble, it won’t bring about the desired fruit of practice. If, though, you do inquire and uproot that false definition, you will know what is meant by, “Brahman alone is real, and the world is not.”

So, whenever you think of these matters as objective topics removed from your own nature, they do become quite irrelevant to Liberation. If they cause you to question your own definition and uproot the false identity, they become very relevant. Do you see?

Q.: Yes, I see.

Another Q.: What I understand is that whenever we inquire “Who am I?” a process of dissolution of ignorance occurs. Whether I think that it does or do not, it is actually occurring for you have said that any inquiry is good. You have also said that it is not difficult, though we are required to be persistent in our practice. If the mind is lazy, it perceives it as a difficulty. It encourages me when you say that there is no bad inquiry, it allows me to be persistent in a way of ease, rather than perceived conflict or resistance. Sometimes, I am in the “I” inquiring “Who am I?” wanting to move into bliss, and the mind is, I am, in a thinking mode. It is a thinking complex rather than just surrender, just moving into the depths. That is challenging for me.

N.: When you are in the thinking mode, how do you proceed?

Q.: Through thought.

N.: Yes, but it is not satisfactory. So, how do you proceed? To rise higher, what do you do?

Q.: Sometimes, I just give up, move out of it, and come back later. I move through it.

N.: Is that a dependable method?

Q.: No. I want to know how to move through it when I face it.

N.: If you just give up, even if you style that giving up with an eloquent, spiritual-sounding term, what, in effect, you are doing is allowing the mind to wander, and the mind, in its wandering, in the course of time, will abandon whatever it was thinking about. It is like a monkey in a tree, which abandons one limb as it grabs another. Of course, observing monkeys for a while, one sees that they do wind up in the same tree again. It is not a dependable method.

If it is truly surrendered, one’s ownership of the mind is relinquished. If one truly inquires, one finds out for whom is all this thinking and finds his Existence to be thought-free. There is no such thing as a “bad inquiry,” and there is really no failure in a spiritual practice, because that goal is not an objective thing to be obtained elsewhere. We could go further with this. Any aspect of spiritual practice is never in vain. Even the least effort applied bears fruit. Nothing wrong or bad can happen as a result of this.

Q.: Sometimes, when I go into the “I,” inquiring, I have the conception that I to identify with the true “I,” or should I keep going deeper into the false “I”? That is the ego “I” or the false identity. If I keep remembering what you teach about who we are, I will fall into that, away from the false and into the Bliss.

N.: Bliss is where the multiplicity of “I”s is relinquished. Whether in the context of recalling instruction or otherwise, the inquiry should be carried on until the false idea of multiple “I”s is dissolved.

Q.: With persistence?

N.: Yes, be persistent. You can never

persevere too intensely or too long. Perseverance overcomes the inertia of the old ignorance.

Q.: When I reach that point, rather than being frustrated about wanting to move to bliss out of the thought complex, stay present to it and stay with the inquiry.

N.: Any time you wish to move into greater freedom and bliss, simply determine some misidentification, an attachment or something more subtle, and destroy it. Your own bliss and freedom are obscured only by the presence of your own misidentifications and attachments. Find a vasana and destroy it. Destroy it by knowing it as a tendency and knowing that it has nothing to do with your happiness or the reality of your Self.

Q.: See, in that moment, what vasanas are present? Then, move deeper into that?

N.: You won't need to move deeper. Just examine it and destroy it, and what remains spontaneously, naturally by itself, without further effort, will, itself, be blissful and shining of the nature of Truth.

Q.: Thank you.

N.: At present, it may appear that you are navigating between states, higher and lower, but the essence of such navigation is to simply destroy the building blocks of that which constitutes the lower or bound state. The substrate, which was previously regarded as the higher state, alone remains.

Q.: What one truly lives by and has understood, whether a name be applied to it or not, is a direct experience?

N.: Yes, that matters much more. What one actually experiences is one's knowledge and one's advancement. The description and discussion of it with others are truly of no consequence.

Q.: So, one's experience is one's real standing. That is one's understanding.

N.: That is right.

Q.: One's life must be the same thing. When they are the same, the aspirant has actually reached a higher place than what was previously understood.

N.: That is right. In the course of such aspiration, if there is higher, or deeper, experience and also time when the experience is not as high or deep, it is incumbent upon the seeker to discern that occurrence, comparing and contrasting, and to examine what makes the difference. The difference will always be what is taken falsely to be your identity in contrast to what you truly know to be your identity. Inquire there, and the previous lower state dissolves. So, the honest examination of oneself, with the recognition of what you actually experience, what you experience at some times, and what you do not experience at all is always worthwhile. This is not for evaluation purposes. The ideas of being a high being or a low being are egotistical. This is only for the purpose of discerning how and in what ways your experience can be elevated to and merge with the Absolute. Such honest self-appraisal is very beneficial.

Q.: So, one's clarity as to what is clear for me and what I actually understand and live enters into this.

N.: Yes. So, if you know that That is the Truth for you always, yet what you are experiencing, or living as you say, does not match that one hundred per cent, you are prompted to examine your experience in more detail. What are the factors that cause you experience to be more limited than what you know to be the eternal Truth? Continue examining and inquiring until every last tendency, everything that separates the life experience from the Absolute, has been dissolved.

Q.: So, the practice is the recognition of the stability in all relative points?

N.: In practical application, for most at most times, that which is most beneficial for the aspirant is the perception of where it is not stable. Where it is already stable, you already know that by direct experience. That is self-evident. Merely to think about it again will not add to you experience. If you can discern where darkness still seems to be in the midst of light, it is eliminated.

Q.: In that context, the ongoing self-evaluation and self-examination is of great importance?

N.: Yes.

Q.: To gauge the path, one's progress, and one's own standing.

N.: How else to destroy the vasanas manifesting in the life unless one first honestly recognizes that these are occurring even though one knows better? Then, inquire.

Q.: Yes. Thank you. This is a wonderful satsang. This has felt very relieving. I have now the insight that deep knowing and deep

clarity are equal to Realization.

N.: (Silence)

(Then followed a recitation in Sanskrit and English of verses from the Annapurna Upanishad.)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

From *Yoga Vasishtha*

Vasishtha said: All the seen objects, such as the world, are polluted by egoism and such and are not anything. As they are not born, there is no question of their existence. What exists is only Brahman. Thus, it alone is Sat, Existence, Truth. All the rest is asat, nonexistence, unreal.

Just as the calm ocean changes into large, fickle waves, so the first Supreme Space (Paramakasha), without abandoning its being Space (akashasatva), appears as a jiva (an individual). Just as the mind in a dream or imagination takes up innumerable forms, Consciousness (Chit) takes up innumerable forms and appears as innumerable jivas....

It is like the army imagined by a painter in a concentrated mood. It is comparable to a pillar in which a picture is not yet carved. The first progenitor, Brahma, is called svayambhuh (self-existent) as he has no reason for his birth. The old progenitors, having no cause for their birth, attained liberation at the time of the great deluge. As they had no previous actions or karmas, such could not bind them. Like a wall reflected in a mirror, the first progenitor ought to have been a seen object. He, though,

does not appear, as he is interdependent and never independent. Without being the seen, the seeing, or the seer, he becomes all, just as a lamp is lit from another lamp, and all the jivas are born from him. Everything comes out of and from him, just as a dream comes out of another dream or a fantasy comes out of another fantasy.

Just as the branches come out of a tree, the jivas come out of him by his touch or his movement. When there is no cause, the cause and the effect are one and the same. Thus, there is no difference between the creation and Brahman. The person on whom the false, transient things, such as the earth, are found, is called adibrahma, the first progenitor, whose one form (or own nature) is jivakasha (the space of the jiva). He is also called virat-atma (The Self shining as the manifold, the cosmic form of the Self manifesting through the aggregate of all bodies.)

Sri Rama asked: Is the jiva limited or unlimited? Is it one or many? If there are many, like massive mountains, are they movable or immovable and endless. As the drops of rain are from the clouds, as small particles of water are from the ocean, and as embers are from a heated iron rod, from where are the jivas emerging? Please explain this.

Vasishta replied: Rama, there is not even a single jiva. Then, from where could innumerable jivas come? Your words are the words of a man who says that he is going about with a horn of a hare. There is no jiva. There is no multitude of jivas. There is no mountain-like, mass of jivas. The idea of a jiva is not real. There is nothing else except Brahman, which is pure, holy, and all-in-all. As it is omni-

potent, the intelligence of all the creations rests in it. The activities or ideas and thoughts, reflected in the caitanya (Consciousness, sentience), are born as objects with form and without form. They are found in Brahman alone. The glow of these activities is like the creeper full of blossoming flowers. It is Brahman that sees the objects.

Thus are the jiva, the intellect (buddhi), action (kriya), mind (manah), dualism (dvaitabhava), and own existence of the Self are to be clearly known and understood. Brahman alone is the everlasting power. Other objects remain for some time by the power of Brahman alone. A true understanding of the power of Brahman dispels the darkness ignorance, which is impossible to define and locate. By the light of the lamp, no doubt, darkness vanishes. That which is darkness none can define. Thus, ignorance vanishes by knowledge. But what ignorance is none can say.

What has just been said is to say that Brahman is the jiva. It is indivisible, endless, omnipotent, beginningless, truth, and of the nature of Consciousness. Brahman is the original nature of everything. There is no difference between this and any other thing, much less the world or creation, which is nothing but Brahman when truly perceived.

From the Temple Archives

[This is a written recording of instructions by Lane Langston, here referred to as “Zero,” a nickname that some had for her, by Shanti Coble. Shanti has not dated the document, but its contents must be from sometime between 1984 and the end of 1986]

Thus Spake “Zero”

By creating a false continuity, you miss what is really continuous.

What you don’t need in death you don’t need in life.

What you are is un-rejectable. Just stay with the Undoubtable. The greatest calamity can turn into the greatest glory.

Lane: Hurry up, come in! Finish your destiny!

Shanti: What did you mean by that?

Lane: See that you are already only That.

Shanti: I keep looking for what you have released that I may not yet have released.

Lane: No need to look for something that isn’t there. There is not a “thing” to be found!

Lane: When you misidentify, you have to accept the limitations that go with that identification. So, be sure that you like them.

Don’t give power to the mind. The power belongs to you! Control implies that it is not already perfect inside.

Shanti: May I speak with you tonight?

Lane: Yes, not that I can give you anything that isn’t already yours.

Shanti: (states her problem), a sense of desperation.

Lane: Are you desperate enough?

Shanti: Yes.

Lane: Ok. Your high experiences were not unreal. Only, what is less needs to be dropped. It does not describe you! You can be very discriminating with holy texts. Wherever the text is off, you know it. Now, read yourself as a book. Accept only the pure Truth. Get rid of the commentary and whatever is extra.

Take apart the mind, ego, and personality. Anything that comes, that feels limiting or like suffering, that makes you feel small or fearful— see that it does not relate to you. Be done with it. Don’t reach for the high moment or for the Truth, or you will be into grasping! Drop, lose, be done with whatever does not feel yours eternally. Not grasping, but losing, the Real alone will remain.

Find the heart of the experiencer, and there will be no more need for experiences.

[This is a letter, dated July 21, 1982, composed by Shanti, written to a friend of hers at the time. The names of individuals have been deleted to preserve their privacy]

Immediate, immaculate Perfection is the only Reality!

There is not flowery speech, but Truth Absolute, that Truth of your own Being, which no destiny can touch. Body and mind are just concepts covering up Consciousness pure, but they can never touch the nature of Reality. They neither modify it nor obscure it. One's own Existence and Being is [sic] never put in question by any happening, however pleasurable or devastating. That which lights up all happenings stands entirely free from them, ever delighting in Its own Bliss-nature. In It, the first division has never yet happened, and mind or world have never yet come to be.

To see this clearly beyond all doubt and to realize it deeply as the only, inevitable, original Truth is the very heart of my coming here and being with Bhagavan. Here is realized the innate Perfection of Being, which knows no second, no grief, no birth, and no death. Here lies the meaning of life, happiness as one's innate Natural State, freedom from personality and suffering, Love that is Perfection Itself.

Dearest _____, you have the same Sat-guru, an unspeakable privilege! And the same capacity for full Realization. To finish all suffering in this lifetime by knowing deeply, constantly the Self's innate natural Peace-Bliss is your only true dharma! In Bhagavan's Presence and Grace, it is possible to transcend all karmas and discontinue the insanity of suffering.

So, with all my heart, I invite you to treat yourself to another visit here, for as long as

possible. Sweetheart, there is a Love here that cannot be expressed, not even in a billion galaxies. It is the Absolute Itself, beyond life and death, beyond the totality of worldly objects and hopes. You are invited to this Love—Bhagavan.

All friends send their warm greetings. _____ has joined us for good. More and more souls are drawn here.

Shanti.

[Verses by Shanti. They are undated, but are probably from the 1980's or early to mid 1990's]

Beautiful Void Being

Is concept free.

Therefore no concept can ever by Me,
Nor define Me, nor express Me,

Nor limit Me, nor block Me,
Nor obstruct Me, nor bind Me,
Nor divide Me, nor split Me,
Nor modify Me, nor catch Me,
Nor diversify, nor trap Me,

Nor relate to Me,
Nor point to Me,
Nor confine Me,

Nor support Me,
Nor clarify Me,

Nor has any concept
Ever come to be.

The shining of Consciousness
Is perfect expression,
“I-I” Principle, Awareness,
Is complete Revelation.

